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Laura P. Bogdan  
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STONE SCULPTURE

by

LAURA P. BOGDAN

A terminal project report submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

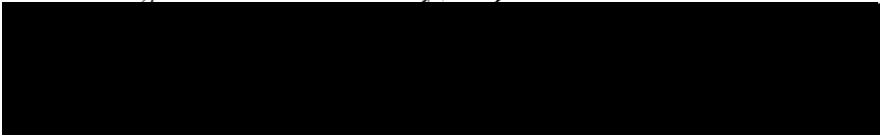
in


SCULPTURE


Portland State University 1981

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE:

The members of the Terminal Project Committee approve  
the thesis of Laura P. Bogdan presented February 23, 1981.


  
James L. Hansen, Chairman

  
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Lisa Andrus

  
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APPROVED:

  
Leonard Kimbrell, Head, Department of Art and Architecture

The challenge of sculpture attracts me. Working with three dimensional shapes and coordinating all sides into a harmonious whole traditionally has been the task of the sculptor. Herbert Read said an artist seeks to give plastic form to his inner awareness and a sculptor has the haptic sensibility or an inner sense of volume as well. To take a material like stone and transform the stone into a work of art indicates a collaboration between man and nature, an act reflecting the common source of man and nature--all living energy. I also enjoy working in stone because it comes from the earth, a "living," natural material. For me, it has a warmth not shared by plastic and metal.

In my own sculpture stone seems the best medium in which to search for the clarity of form expressing simplicity, order and vitality and of giving form to feelings. If I fail to instill in a sculpture that spark of life that causes the work to "breathe" and exist by itself as a living entity, the work is just a piece of stone and not a work of art. Henry Moore describes vitality: "One of the things I would like to think my sculpture has is a force, a strength, a life, a vitality from inside it, so you have a sense that the form is pressing from inside trying to burst or trying to give off the strength from inside itself, rather than having something

which is just shaped from outside and stopped. It is as though you have something trying to make itself come into a shape from inside itself."

The following discussion presents the stone works of the past two years, with the exception of one figurative stone piece done as an undergraduate which accompanied my thesis exhibition of stone sculpture. I included this early piece to help demonstrate my development from a figurative style toward the later figurative abstraction. (Compare Figure 1 to Figure 11) Figure 1 is a reclining figure similar to three pieces I had previously cast in bronze--one reclining figure and two seated figures. All of these were derived from my interest at that time in the classical poses of the human form and from the inspiration of Henry Moore. The bronze pieces were quite simplified and monumental--similar to the stone reclining figure presented here.

"Three Forms" (Figure 2) was done in the first year of my graduate studies from leftover stone pieces. It was created quickly and spontaneously with no drawings or finished works in mind. It is similar to some of my more recent forms in that the two larger ones have a somewhat flat side, and two of these forms are also flat on top while the third is rounded. To me, these are also figurative.

The next two sculptures were not conceived as a pair but were purchased at my graduate show to be displayed together by the buyer. "Eve" (Figure 3) was done at a time when I was researching ancient art, as was a large stone figure titled "Pomona" that is not included here. A pomona is a Roman mythological figure. I especially admired the pomonas of Marino Marini at that time. I like the primitive quality of "Eve" and its relationship to the Cycladian earth-mother/goddess symbols. The round forms of the torso are accentuated by the center wedge-shaped cut. The flat top holds the piece firmly to the base. This piece is entitled "Eve" because after doing the next sculpture, a male torso, it seemed more appropriate than "Goddess."

I did several drawings of Greek kouroi figures for this male torso called "Adam" (Figure 4). I was not completely satisfied with the sculpture as a personification of the male figure. Adam is quite feminine in feeling as were the Greek kouroi and perhaps this is the difficulty for such a generalization.

Both "Adam" and "Eve" are highly simplified torsos and indicate little interest in movement. Both are quite geometrical while maintaining the vitality that I like.

"Fecundity" is another fertility/earth goddess piece. (Figure 5) Although this sculpture had to be pinned to the

base for safety, the physical balance of it is just right. This piece was done from drawings on paper, and then transferred to the stone, which is often the way I work. "Fecundity" shows my interest at that time in Brancusi's work. I feel this is one of my most successful works expressing vitality.

"Torso of a Young Girl" (Figure 6) is a figure with arms raised. I selected the title since the budding figure and barely perceptible waistline seems that of an adolescent girl.

"Pilgrim" (Figure 7) was the first attempt to add a block of stone on top of another block. The "arm" piece is pinned for safety. I like the small spaces between the crossed arm piece and the torso itself. The stacked, two-piece base helps balance the sculpture and, therefore, must be included as part of the sculpture.

Figure 8 is another torso inspired by Brancusi's "Caryatid" and its movement and primitive vitality. It has a subtle "S" shaped form. The photograph does not show the movement clearly, but it is not strictly a vertical piece as the photograph implies.

Figure 9 or "Lingum" is also a torso which I had planned to turn upside down. However, it turned out to be quite phallic which I couldn't eliminate, so I left it as a phallic symbol. The line down the middle is the back bone. The

other side is quite flat. The title implies the Eastern symbol of masculine fertility as found in the Temples of Angkor, Cambodia, which I have visited.

"Two Forms" is also a torso. I attempted to use two large blocks of stone to construct a figure. There is, again, a flat side on each piece. This is an approach I find increases the roundness and prevents a piece from appearing deformed. This piece seems significant in my development in learning to construct with stone. (Figure 10)

"Joie de Vivre" (Figure 11) is one stone that I cut into two pieces. This is the first time I deliberately cut a "hole" with no aesthetic reason for its being there. It is not a figurative piece but more of an adventure in making a "hole" in the stone. It began as a figure but the technical problems I had in cutting it out changed the direction. Like the works of Barbara Hepworth, who was the first sculptor to pierce the stone in this manner (some historians say), this center space does not have a technical reason for being there but perhaps has a spiritual one. Hence the title "Joie de Vivre."

A later figure done after my thesis exhibition is a three-piece construction of a reclining figure that is so abstracted the human figure is barely recognizable. However, it still retains the feeling of a figure resting in a reclining position. This is the first three-piece construction.



The general subject uniting these sculptures is the female figure. Out of eleven works all but one are derived from the female figure, and that exception is "Adam." Most of the sculptures are torsos. Kenneth Clark says the female nude is not only a subject but an art form. Like many artists before, I am interested in the rounded forms of the female figure for their beauty and vitality. Another influence regarding women is more sociological. I am living in a time in history when the image of women is changing. As a woman and mother of three this revolution affects me directly and is also expressed in my sculpture. My sculpture titled "Pilgrim" is one such work indicating the long pilgrimage of women toward equality. I tried to express the strength and dignity of women in this work.

In addition, my interest in the religions of man, his myths and rituals are reflected in my work in the subject of women as goddesses and fertility symbols. I believe man must live in harmony with nature or suffer extinction. The female figure as a symbol of the renewal of mankind (and womankind) is similar to that of the springtime which brings a renewal of life to the earth. Since both man and nature seem to have a common source, they are united spiritually. I, personally, recognize my own spiritual nature.

Religion is reflected in my sculpture through simplification and abstraction of the human form to get at essence and truth.

This abstraction of the figure has led toward more geometric forms in my sculpture. However, geometry, to me, reflects man's more rational, intellectual side--are there any squares or circles in nature?--while the intangible we call "vitality" and "energy" reflect man's relationship to the universe and to the unknown--areas of religion. I will try to incorporate both into my sculptures.

## LIST OF FIGURES

Reclining figure.....	Fig. 1
Three Forms.....	Fig. 2
Eve.....	Fig. 3
Adam.....	Fig. 4
Fecundity.....	Fig. 5
Torso of a Young Woman.....	Fig. 6
Pilgrim.....	Fig. 7
Torso.....	Fig. 8
Lingum.....	Fig. 9
Two Forms.....	Fig. 10
Joie de Vivre.....	Fig. 11

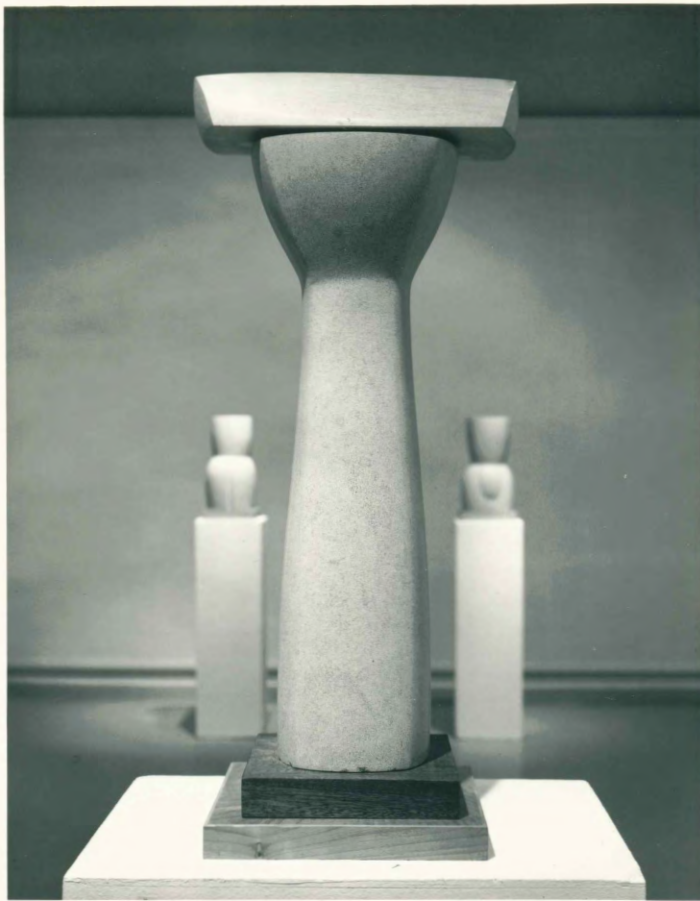


Figure 7



Figure 1





Figure 3

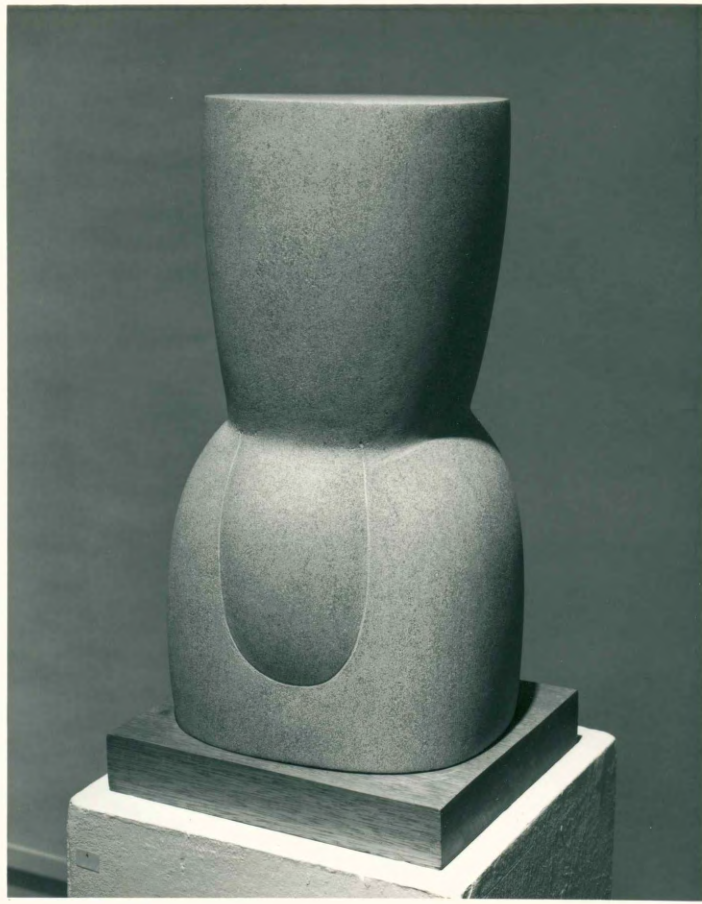


Figure 4



Figure 5





Figure 11

